

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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DRC-01 /152 W

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R 201154Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8395

INFO AMCONSUL CHINAG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18107

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, TH

SUBJ: INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO NEW AMBASSADOR

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "THE NATION" PUBLISHED A MODERATE EDITORIAL COMMENTING ON THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR KINTNER. A SMALL STUDENT GROUP AT CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY PUBLISHED AND PASSED OUT AN ANTI-AMERICAN LEAFLET WHICH RAISED THE SPECTRE OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND RASIED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S MILITARY AND CIA BACKGROUND. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE "THE NATION" RAN A MODERATELY WORDED EDITORIAL ENTITLED "KINTNER FACES DIFFICULT JOB" NOVEMBER 20. THE EDITORIAL COMMENTED THAT THE NEW AMBASSAODR ARRIVES AT A UNIQUE TIME IN THAI HISTORY AND ARGUES THAT HE HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPORT GREATER FLEXIBILITY INTO RTG-USG RELATIONS. THE AUTHOR MUSES THAT THE AMBASSADOR, CHOSEN TO DEAL WITH THE PREVIOUS
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"GOVERNMENT OF GENERALS," NOW FACES A "GOVERNMENT OF

INTELLECTUALS." YET, "IN ALL FAIRNESS MR. KINTNER SHOULD BE GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME TO ADJUST" TO THE NEW THAILAND. THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES THAT "MR. KINTNER'S THORNIEST PROBLEM WILL BE THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN BASES." EVEN THOUGH THAILAND MAY UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES INVOLVED, AMERICAN BASES ARE "AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE."

2. A LEAFLET PUBLISHED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE FREE CHULALONGKORN GROUP (FCG) CONDEMNS "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND ITS "HANDMAIDEN" THE CIA, BOTH OF WHICH SUPPORTED THE "PREVIOUS TYRANICAL GOVERNMENT." AMBASSADOR KINTNER IS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED IN THE ANTI-AMERICAN TONE OF THE LEAFLET FOR HIS ALLEGED LINKS TO THE CIA AS "DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA" AND FOR HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND. THE LEAFLET CONTINUES THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S APPOINTMENT "WAS WIDELY PROTESTED BY LEADERS OF THE SENATE AND INTELLECTUALS." THEREFORE, THE THAI PEOPLE SHOULD CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZE THE ACTIONS OF THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

3. CONCLUSION: THAILAND IS ENTERING A PHASE WHERE THE SUBJECT OF RTG-USG RELATIONS WILL BE MORE OPENLY DISCUSSED THAN BEFORE. WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW AMBASSADOR WILL ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF A NUMBER OF GROUPS WITHIN THE THAI POLITY AND PROVIDE A SPRINGBOARD TO DISCUSS THAI-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE FCG, HOWEVER, IS A SMALL FRINGE GROUP WHICH IS NOT IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THAI STUDENT OR NATIONAL POLITICS. ONE THAI NEWSPAPER-WOMAN, RECENTLY GRADUATED FROM CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, TOLD THE PRESS ATTACHE IT WAS HER UNDERSTANDING THE FCG HAD BEEN FRUSTRATED RECENTLY BECAUSE OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WERE GETTING ALL THE ATTENTION. THE FCG THUS PLANNED THIS ACTIVITY TO GAIN WIDE RECOGNITION AS A TRUE ACTIVIST GROUP. THE MORE SOBER THOUGHTS OF "THE NATION'S" EDITORIAL ARE PROBABLY MORE IN TUNE WITH THE FEELINGS OF THE AWARE THAI ELITE.

KINTNER

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